

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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Department of Licensing Probe Leads to 20 Count Federal Indictment

In April of 2004, Detectives of the Washington State Patrol Criminal Investigation Division in Yakima and Kennewick began an investigation at the request of the Department of Licensing. The Department of Licensing received a tip that one of their Licensing Examiners was accepting bribes for issuing drivers licenses under false names and issuing licenses without requiring the person to pass normal licensing requirements. The licensing examiner was identified as Antonio Sanchez. In November of 2004, Mr. Sanchez resigned and fled to Mexico.

As WSP Detectives continued to investigate the case, the Federal Bureau of Investigation received similar information resulting in the WSP and the FBI conducting a joint investigation that began in December.

In April of 2005, the investigation was completed and forwarded to a Federal prosecutor who presented the case to a Grand Jury in June of 2005. The Grand Jury subsequently issued an indictment consisting of two counts of unlawfully producing and affecting interstate commerce and a federal warrant was issued for Mr. Sanchez's arrest that same month. Mr. Sanchez was arrested for the warrant in July of 2005 while attempting to re-enter the United States in Laredo, Texas. He was returned to Washington State, where he is currently in custody awaiting trial.

On October 12, 2005 additional information was presented to the Grand Jury by the US Attorney's Office resulting in 18 further indictments alleging that Mr. Sanchez used the US Mail in the commission of these crimes.

The indictments in this case were the culmination of year long investigation involving the Washington State Department of Licensing, Washington State Patrol, local Law Enforcement Agencies, Local Prosecuting Attorneys, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the US Attorney's Office. The cooperative effort of all of these agencies attests to the effectiveness of Law Enforcement Agencies coordinating their effort in order to protect our citizens.

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